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## FOLLOWING THE TRAIL.

THE readers of Cooper's novels, or of modern sporting works, must be well acquainted with the names 'trail' and 'spoor.' Hawk-eye and his two Indian companions were adepts on a trail; each could follow the course of a man or men without any difficulty, could tell the number that had passed over the ground, the time that had elapsed since their passage, and, in fact, nearly every particular concerning them, just as well as though the eyes of these pursuers had actually beheld the men whose traces only they had observed.

Many of the readers of these novels or journals may possibly suppose that the incidents related occurred merely in the imagination of the writers; but from our own experience, we are aware that such events are by no means uncommon amongst races whose whole lives have been devoted to this study, which in their case actually becomes an art.

As in other matters, there are some men who, from their peculiar mental development, excel all others in this one particular branch: they are really professors thereof; but there are certain elementary principles connected with the subject, which all people may understand.

Let us now accompany a Hottentot, Kaffir, or Bushman in search of elephants, and inquire by what means he discovers his game. He will first make for the nearest water, which may be in a pond or river; he does this because he knows that the animal of which he is in search must drink at least once during two or three days; and therefore he will discover the footprints of the creatures, if any elephants happen to have quenched their thirst at those localities. He is from observation aware of the appearance of the footprints of elephants, and he knows that those of a bull-elephant are nearly circular, whilst those of a cow are egg-shaped. Upon reaching one of the ponds, the man at once announces that, during the night, elephants drank at the pool, that they were bull-elephants, and that they stayed some time near the water. It will be evident to all readers how the man knew that the elephants were bulls, but it may not be quite so apparent how it was known that they had stayed some time, or that they drank during the night. Why might they not have drunk on the previous day, or in the morning of the day on which the spoor was seen? The Hottentot or Kaffir observes

that whilst there are not very many different kinds of footmarks, yet that impressions of the same sort have been made in all directions round and in the water. We have now arrived at a somewhat fine distinction, for a multitude of footmarks might indicate that a multitude of animals had visited the locality, just as well as that a few animals had stayed a long time; but there would be this difference, that whereas, even in a large herd, it is unusual to find two footmarks exactly alike, consequently there would be a multitude of different footmarks if the herd were very large; whilst the same footmarks would be repeated often if a few animals had walked about a long time near the same place. It would be at such a point as this that a careless observer would arrive at an erroneous conclusion, whereas a professor would incur no chance of being misled.

Let us now inquire by what means it was known that the night was the period during which the elephants had visited the pool. In a hot climate, and where the sun is nearly vertical, the ground becomes rapidly dry. Wet mud, even if scattered about, will, in the space of an hour or two, become hard and dry if the sun shines upon it. When, then, the mud deposited by the elephants is found quite wet, and their footprints on the mud are also wet, it is evident that no sun can have shone on either, and hence that the animals must have been on the spot after the previous day's sun, but before that of the day on which the inspection has occurred. But, again, we shall find that an adept will declare that it was early in the night, or just before daybreak in the morning, that the creatures visited the water. By what means could this fact be known? In almost all hot climates, the dew begins to fall heavily immediately the sun sets; and although it continues falling all night, still the greatest amount falls in the first two or three hours after dark. The spoorer, in order to decide this question, would examine the ground beneath some branches of trees, and where grass had been trodden into the ground. If, then, it was found on inspection that there was scarcely a drop of water on any of the footmarks, then it would be evident that the foot had been there *after* the greatest amount of dew had fallen; whereas, if there were very many drops on the footmark, then the dew must have fallen *after* the animal had left its impression on the ground.

Thus, from the very simplest observation, and the

application of a little reasoning, we could discover what animals had visited a pond, the time of the visit, about the number and size of the animals, that they had stayed during a long or short time, and we could trace the course which they had pursued after drinking. A professor in the art, however, would very soon discover more than this about the creatures, as the following anecdote will shew:

'That,' said a Hottentot one day, 'is the elephant I wounded last week,' pointing as he spoke to the footprints on a patch of sand. 'Yes, it is *him*.'

'How do you know?'

'Because he is lame on the near fore-leg; and it was there my bullet struck him.'

'How can you tell he is lame?'

'Look at his spoor. There, see, he takes a long step with his right fore-leg, then a short one with his left, and so on. Now you walk lame, and you will find that that is what you do.'

There is really no difficulty in telling by the footprints when an animal is lame, or in discovering on which leg he is lame.

Again, it will be evident to the senses of a professional trailer that the elephants walked very slowly, and were not consequently alarmed by anything; because he remarks that they stayed to feed in many places, and ate several branches of trees; and here, again, we have an additional means of discovering the time that has elapsed since the animals passed. The broken boughs have in many places been allowed to remain untouched. The spoorers know that the tender young leaves will very soon fade when the branch is broken off from the stem, and yet several of the most delicate have as yet scarcely shewn any indications of drooping; but a few hours can therefore have elapsed since the creatures traversed the forest-path along which we are following them. Considerable judgment and experience are required to enable a person to decide upon the exact number of days that have elapsed since any footprints were made. The causes that make spoor look old are rain, sunshine, wind, and dew. A heavy shower of rain is very damaging, as it entirely washes out those details which enable us to decide upon the peculiar characteristics of an animal; but when a day or so has elapsed, then we derive an advantage from the same cause, for we can tell whether it was before or after the rain that the animals passed over the ground; and the impressions are always more marked and distinct after a shower than when the soil is hard and dry. A very hot sun soon dries up the ground, and often causes spoor to look older than it really is, whilst the wind will either blow small particles of sand over the spoor, and thus take away from it its very new look, if it be on ground disposed to dust, or disturb the grass or vegetation, if it be on more fertile soil. The most difficult ground upon which to follow a trail is very hard, barren soil. This description takes no impression, and there are no vegetable productions by the fracture of which a clue can be obtained to the direction in which any creature has travelled. The smallest amount of grass and some shrubs or trees serve admirably to point to the direction in which any animal may have gone. If amongst bushes, we shall always find that the branches in some places are pushed back behind those which evidently occupy their natural position, and they could only be thus relatively placed by the transit of some animal. It takes a considerable time before a person bred in a city becomes acquainted even with the elements of the science of trailing, or is able at a glance to distinguish the footprint of a deer from that of a goat, sheep, or pig; or to tell a fox's from a dog's footprint; and it takes even a longer time before a town-bred European learns his A B C of the art in India, Africa, or America. It is surprising, however, how much even a slight knowledge of trails and trailing adds to the interest of a walk in

a wild country, even though we be not in search of game for the purpose of destroying it. We may observe where some animals have chosen to feed, lie down, or live; and thus to a certain extent we can discover many of their habits and peculiarities, although we have not set eyes on them.

A knowledge of trailing will often enable us to find creatures which otherwise we should have entirely overlooked. For example, some few years ago, a friend was very desirous of seeing a wild otter, and informed us of his wish. We happened to be walking near a very unlikely stream some days afterwards, when we observed on the grass the impression of an animal's foot, which was, however, very imperfectly delineated. With some trouble, we followed this spoor for about a hundred yards, and then came to the distinct footmark of an otter. Having informed our friend that we believed an otter to be near this spot, we from curiosity brought him to the stream, and led him several times over tolerably fresh spoor on the grass. He did not take any notice of the trail, and on the indistinct marks being pointed out to him, he asserted that they were only the accidental effects of wind and rain; and it was not until we led him to wet mud that he could perceive that there was spoor.

One of the finest acts of spooring to which we were ever a witness occurred when in search of buffaloes, on foot, and in a dense bush, in Africa. The footprints of some half-dozen buffaloes were observed on the banks of a pool of water, near which some cattle were grazing. The spoor of a buffalo is very similar to that of an ox or cow, and it therefore required some skill to distinguish the one from the other. My Kaffir, however, declared that there could be no mistake about it, for he said he knew nearly each individual footprint of the cattle, as they belonged to his brother. Placing great confidence in the judgment of this Kaffir, we followed him as he traced the animals over the ground, which was in many places as hard as rock, and where scarcely any impression had been made by their passage. At length, we entered the bush, and there the spoor was even more puzzling. In many cases, we had to remove a mass of dead-leaves before we came to the impression of the footprints of the animal of which we were in search. After following the spoor for about a mile, the Kaffir halted, and declared that the buffalo which appeared the largest was blind of its right eye. This conclusion, he said, he had arrived at in consequence of noticing that the buffalo always took the path to the left hand instead of that to the right, and in many instances the animal had run against trees or branches on the right, but carefully avoided those on the left. When about two miles in the bush, the Kaffir halted, and looked more carefully than ever at the spoor; he then commenced crawling over the ground, looking intently at every leaf. He shortly stood up and said: 'We are behind; my brother is before us. He has happened to cross the footmarks, and is after the buffaloes: it is no good going on.' Although by no means unskilled in spooring at that time, yet we had to walk on upwards of a hundred yards before we found any marks that were plain enough to convince us that our Kaffir had been correct in his statements. Even then, we could only affirm that a man with naked feet was on before us, but the Kaffir said he knew the spoor well; it was his brother's. How he knew it to be so, he could not explain; but, as the sequel shewed, he was correct. It is quite easily to comprehend that there may be a something unexplainable about a footmark which yet enables a man to recognise it, who has long studied the various peculiarities in the spoor of his friends. We are all accustomed to recognise the footstep of a friend, when we hear it, although to untrained ears the noise made by one person in walking is as like that made by another as is one footprint to another. Before we had proceeded

many hundred yards beyond the spot on which the Kaffir had seen his brother's spoor, we heard the loud report of a gun; and upon reaching the spot, some half an hour after, we found my Kaffir's brother commencing to skin a buffalo *that was blind of its right eye*.

There were of the party two other Kaffirs, both excellent spoorers, yet they seemed at all times to yield their judgment to the leader, just as a moderate or even good chess-player would waive his opinion if it were in opposition to that of such men as Morphy or Paulsen. We have usually found that men who have been much accustomed to follow the spoor are calm, deliberate, and thoughtful. They have been so much accustomed to encounter difficult problems, in which mere rule is of no service, but where reasoning must be brought to bear upon the facts before them, that they rarely form a hasty judgment or conclusion, although probably better qualified to do so than those who would unhesitatingly pronounce a verdict. Among those subjects that come before us in civilisation, there are many in which the art of spooring becomes essential. The detective who, having a certain amount of evidence (often very small), seeks to collect more facts, then draws his conclusions, speculates, and then endeavours to *prove* whether his speculation be correct, is really adopting much the same process that the savage does in tracing his wounded game.

That the science of geology (which is one in which the art of spooring is much employed, and is very useful) should have remained unknown until a modern period, indicates that the minds of individuals and of the mass, even in countries boasting of their science, are not always well qualified either to observe or to reason upon that which has been observed; for even after a vast mass of facts were accumulated in connection with this science, it yet required years before the natural conclusions from them were accepted. The tracing out the antiquity of man is a proceeding very similar to following an old spoor, and much the same type of mind would excel in each science.

When in South Africa, and before we had passed many days in the bush, we frequently felt unpleasantly small, when we found that a naked savage was smiling at our ignorance in regard to the spoor of a buck which we had wounded, or of some larger game, of which we were in search. There is not too much to occupy one in some of the out-stations of that distant country, so that the mind is usually free to devote itself to that amusement to which it is most inclined. To become an adept in spooring, therefore, was not a very uncouth fancy; and to this end we devoted some time.

It is almost impossible for an animal of any size to walk through a dense bush without breaking off some branches, small or large. Here was a fact from which much useful information could be obtained. A number of branches of different sizes being broken from the trees most prevalent in the bush, several of these were placed on the ground, some in the sun, others in the shade. A memorandum was then made of the various fading effects occurring after certain intervals. Some species of leaves would fade much more rapidly than would others, but a number of facts would be here brought to light, which would serve as guides for the future. As a general rule, small branches or twigs fade and look withered before the larger; and those which are entirely broken off, will wither much more rapidly than those attached even by a small piece of bark to the parent tree. If a tolerably large branch be almost broken off a tree, but be allowed to remain fastened even by a small splinter, still the leaves at the extremity of the branch will look fresh and green for several days; whereas, had the separation been complete, they would have faded after a very few hours. The appear-

ance of the actual fracture of a branch is nearly as good a guide to the time that has elapsed since the damage was done, as is the state of the leaves, the sap in some instances continuing to flow much longer than in other cases; but by means of specimens, this fact can be logged with tolerable accuracy; and thus when we have to examine a broken branch, we can, by remembering our experiments, affirm that, perhaps, not more than an hour has elapsed since the damage was done, or that it must have occurred eight or nine hours previous to our investigation.

Again, we may examine the effects on our own or our horse's footprints produced by wind, rain, sunshine, and time; and thus, in a few weeks, we may become tolerably qualified to offer an opinion, when we discover any spoor. There are one or two methods by which we can ascertain the rate at which an animal has travelled. If the ground be of such a nature as to retain distinctly the impression of footmarks, then, by the manner in which these are arranged on the ground, we may know about the pace adopted by the animal. Let us take the horse, for example. At a walk, a horse usually brings his hind-feet to the ground at nearly the same place that his fore-feet occupied, so that the impression of the hind-foot is in part over that of the fore. Some horses that have a long stride in walking, will place the hind-foot at least five or six inches in advance of where the fore-foot was placed, but this is not the usual relative position of the two feet. When trotting, the position of the feet is almost similar, except when the pace is very rapid; then, however, the impression of the hind-feet will come even a greater distance in advance of those of the fore. There will, however, be a marked difference in the actual footprints made by a walking or trotting horse. In trotting, the impression is deeper, the hind-toe is more deeply marked in the ground, whilst earth, leaves, or other matter are generally scattered a little behind the spoor of the foot that has cast them along the ground.

When a horse canters, he makes four distinct marks of his four feet at nearly equal intervals from each other; there is then a greater interval, and again four marks, and so on. When a horse canters slowly, the interval between the four marks is much less than when the same animal is galloping; also, the line formed by the four footmarks diverges slightly from the direction in which the animal is cantering, when the speed is not great; but when the four marks are in the direction that the animal is travelling, then he is going at speed. It not unfrequently happens that the most obtuse-looking individuals possess a considerable amount of observation, especially as regards details, and this we once found to be the case when spooring. It was in the New Forest, that, being desirous to meet a friend who was on horseback, we were examining for spoor, and considered ourselves fortunate when we crossed the fresh track of a horse, as this we at first fancied might be that of our friend; a young, rough-looking forester, however, upon looking at the same spoor, informed us that the horse was not that of our expected visitor, but only a forest-horse running at grass, because, he said, 'he beant got no shoes on;' a tolerably convincing proof that the horse had not been ridden along hard roads, and, in fact, that it was not mounted. A distant view of the animal soon proved that this man's conclusion was correct.

A spoor that once puzzled us for many days was one that we observed on the hard sands at low-water, on the south-eastern coast of Africa. Two large footmarks were visible on the sand; then there was the appearance as though a heavy body had been dragged along, and so that it nearly obliterated the footprints; finally, two arcs of circles were described of a nearly semicircular shape, and these were as accurately traced as though made with a pair of compasses. At first, we supposed that some of the natives had amused

themselves by dragging along the branches of a tree, but a glance obtained here and there at the footprints showed that they were not human. Taking the matter up in a business point of view, we were led to conclude, first, that the creature, whatever it was, had only two legs, which were in front; that it dragged its body, in a great measure, after it, and thus the wriggle of the hind quarters made the strange arcs of circles observed to be the last marks made. A creature of this description ought to be something like a seal, and the fact of the spoor being found on the sea-beach gave this supposition a strong shade of probability. Time at length solved the mystery, for whilst riding on this beach one afternoon, the creature itself was seen, after we had noticed the fresh spoor for nearly half a mile; and it turned out to be a species of sealion or sea-leopard, which had evidently paid a visit to this shore.

Another very curious spoor was that made by a rock-snake of large size. This we first observed on the sand near a river; but after some slight thought, we determined that the traces were due to a snake, although to one of a very great size. In all cases, however, a spoor is to be worked out like a problem, and requires as much brain-work as many equations, and far more original talent and observation. Thus, sporing, when thoroughly taken up and carefully followed, is not only an amusement, and one to which the hunter frequently owes his dinner, but it is also one that calls into active operation some of those reasoning faculties which might otherwise, when in the desert, become weak from disuse.

#### EPIGRAMS.

PERHAPS the duller book in the world to read right through is a jest-book; nor is this to be attributed to the incompetency of the compiler: having ordered a dinner entirely composed of sweetmeats, we might just as reasonably blame the cook because we feel cloyed. For the most part, however, editors of works of this sort do not perform their task well. The first part of their volume consists of all that most easily occurs to them—that is to say, the best and most sparkling things; the rest is produced with effort, and is of less worth. Now, a second-rate joke after a good one is worse than Marsala after Sherry at a feast.

A little of this must be charged against Mr Booth's late volume of *Epigrams, Ancient and Modern*, the end whereof is somewhat of a bathos, and the contents of which would have been more valuable had half of them been expunged; but still there are plenty of plums for any literary Jack Horner. May we, in selecting the same for their perusal, earn the good opinion of our readers as Master J. H. earned his own praise.\*

Literally speaking, an epigram simply means an inscription, and the epigrams of the ancients rather resembled epitaphs, than the sparkling verse in which our fathers so delighted, and in the construction of which they took such elaborate pains. With us, again, the one is almost as exploded as the other. Verse is too cumbersome a form in which to express our wit. It has been written:

An epigram should be, if right,  
Short, simple, pointed, keen, and bright,  
A lively little thing!  
Like wasp with taper body—bound  
By lines—not many—neat and round,  
All ending in a sting;

but even this does not suit the notions of now a days. We cannot wait to listen for the concluding couplet, let its excellence be what it may; we are impatient of those opening stanzas with nothing in them. We want

\* He put in his thumb and pulled out a plum,  
And cried: 'What a good boy am I!'

the actual combat, and not the note of preparation. Here is a fine epigram, according to our fathers' notions:

Says the earth to the moon: 'You're a pilfering jade;  
What you steal from the sun is beyond all belief.'  
Fair Cynthia replies: 'Madam Earth, hold your prate;  
The receiver is always as bad as the thief.'

The idea is good, but what an immense amount of padding! Yet directly a good idea struck a wit of that date, far from giving vent to it at once, and setting the table in a roar, he retired into seclusion, and dressed it up, as a child does a doll, to fit it, as he thought, to appear in public. He sought out mellifluous lines, with at least one telling rhyme to end with, and then solicited a place for his composition in the columns of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. 'I've lost my portmanteau,' said a clergyman to a fellow-traveller. 'I am sorry for you,' returned the other. 'And all my sermons are in it,' added the parson. 'Ah, then I pity the thief.' As an actual dialogue, the above would be admirable; but when it is done into verse, and pompously entitled *The Traveller and the Clergyman*, like a moral fable, it becomes to our taste wearisome and artificial. The poor parsons were given up for a prey to epigram-writers of this kind. If one fell asleep at a party, something like this was written upon him, but by no means uttered extempore:

Still let him sleep, still let us talk, my friends;  
When next he preaches, we'll have full amends.

If another fell off his horse in a fox-hunt, he was, in addition to that misfortune, epigrammatised in six tedious lines and two good ones:

A clerical prig, who one morn joined the chase,  
For which he had always an itching,  
Was thrown from his horse, and fell flat on his face  
A dangerous, dirty, deep ditch in.

Each Nimrod that passed him for help loud did cry,  
But onward all eagerly panted;  
The whipper-in lustily roars: 'Let him lie!  
Till Sunday he will not be wanted.'

Sometimes the physician came in for a share of this not too good-humoured satire:

How D.D. swaggers, M.D. rolls!  
I dub them both a brace of noddies;  
Old D.D. takes the cure of souls,  
And M.D. takes the cure of bodies.

Between them both, what treatment rare  
Our souls and bodies must endure;  
One takes the cure without the care;  
T'other, the care without the cure.

The two concluding lines are really perfect; the two that precede them are feeble; the whole of the first verse is beneath contempt. Out of the same mind, it is difficult to imagine how such dulness and such wit could proceed.

The famous epigram on George III.'s physicians is an example, however, of the advantage of rhyme; the wit lying in the metrical form, and in the form only:

The king employed three doctors daily—  
Willis, Heberden, and Baillie—  
All exceedingly skilful men,  
Baillie, Willis, Heberden;  
But doubtful which most sure to kill is—  
Baillie, Heberden, or Willis.

A very excellent medical joke, of which the physician is not the butt, for a wonder, runs as follows:

One day the surveyor, with a sigh and a groan,  
Said: 'Doctor, I'm dying of gravel and stone.'  
The doctor replied: 'This is true, then, though odd,  
What kills a surveyor's a cure for a road.'



To object to a good thing upon the ground of its untruth—of the event it describes not having actually occurred—is the part of a malicious dullard; but the stamp of artificiality is so strongly impressed upon some of these things, that it cannot escape notice; it obtrudes itself upon the kindest of critics. It is impossible to imagine, for instance, that a gentleman of eighty, of the suggestive name of Gould, could have had the indiscretion not only to marry a young lady of eighteen, but to write to a friend with a turn for satire in the following terms:

So you see, my dear sir, though I'm eighty years old,  
A girl of eighteen is in love with old Gould.

Mr G. *must* have known what would come of it; the friend could not fail to reply in some such way as this—it being, as the Scotch say, so 'teed' for him:

A girl of eighteen may love Gold, it is true;  
But believe me, dear sir, it is Gold without U.

Those charming volumes, the *Elegant Extracts*, are full of epigrams of this sort, with a title almost as long as the contents.

A singular method was employed by the wits of a certain epoch to eke out their intellectual store; not only did they put their good things into verse, but they cast about for some place to write them in or upon, which should be itself significant, as thus:

#### WRITTEN ON A LOOKING-GLASS.

I change, and so do women too;  
But I reflect—which women never do.

To which a lady is said to have replied:

If women reflected, O scribbler, declare  
What man—faithless man—would be blessed by the fair!

What wit of to-day would ever dream of writing on a looking-glass; or if such a project entered his head, would have the patience to go through with it—would borrow a diamond ring (for wits seldom possess such things), and deliberately spoil a mirror! Glass was, however, a favourite vehicle for epigrams half a century ago.

WRITTEN ON A PIECE OF GLASS, THE FIFTIETH OF AN INCH IN LENGTH, AND THE TWO-HUNDREDTH OF AN INCH IN WIDTH.

A point within an epigram to find  
In vain you often try;  
But here an epigram within a point  
You plainly may descry.

Conceive the elaboration of design and execution of the above distich! Is it possible that the author could have been a really humorous fellow? Swift tells us that in his time it was quite unusual to find a window-pane without some attempt at epigram upon the face of it, and goes into raptures over virgin glass:

Thanks to my stars! I once can see  
A window here from scribbling free;  
Here no conceited coxcombs pass,  
To scratch their paltry drabs on glass;  
No party fool is calling names,  
Or dealing crowns to George and James.

In Mr Booth's volume, there is more than one epigram in which the whole merit lies, as it seems to us, in the fact that it *was* written upon glass; and it would have been no matter if the window had been broken before the copyist came.

The elaboration of verse does not suit ill with philosophical epigrams, as in the case of this one upon Fortune:

Bad fortune is a fancy; she is just;  
Gives the poor hope; and sends the rich distrust.  
The following, upon *Vulgar Natures*, is admirably

true, and does not include a line that could well be spared:

Tender-handed, stroke a nettle,  
And it stings you for your pains;  
Grasp it like a man of mettle,  
And it soft as silk remains.  
'Tis the same with vulgar natures;  
Use them kindly, they rebel;  
Be as rough as nutmeg graters,  
And the rogues obey you well.

Here, again, is an example of more cumbersome wit, written by Rochester, on a *Psalm-singing Clerk*:

Sternhold and Hopkins had great qualms  
When they translated David's Psalms,  
To make the heart full glad;  
But had it been poor David's fate  
To hear thee sing, and them translate,  
By Jove, 'twould have drove him mad.

A wit of to-day, upon leaving a church where the psalms had been sung in a very wearisome manner, observed to his companion: 'Now I know why Saul wanted to kill David.' What a contrast in the *form* of wit do these two examples present!

The following is excellent in its simplicity:

#### A GOOD HEARING.

'I heard last week, friend Edward, thou wast dead;  
'I'm very glad to hear it, too,' cries Ned.

Not less admirable are these two lines upon *Know Thyself*:

'I have not said so to you, my friend, and I'm not going,  
You may find so many people better worth knowing.'

Mr Booth informs us that for these we are indebted to Confucius, but we can hardly believe it. It is, however, quite as likely that the Chinese sage wrote *them*, as that the Bard of Avon wrote the following:

#### ON A WOMAN WHO HAD AN ISSUE IN HER LEG.

Here lieth Margaret, otherwise Meg,  
Who died without issue, save one in her leg.  
Strange woman was she, and exceedingly cunning,  
For whilst one leg stood still, the other kept running.  
*Author supposed to be Shakespeare.*

There is a strange couplet *Upon a Wicked Man killed by a Fall from his Horse*:

Between the stirrup and the ground,  
I mercy sought, I mercy found,

to be found, we believe, in Camden's *Remains*; but where we ourselves first saw it, on a desolate spot in a mountainous region, and evidently over a grave, it struck us as especially curious.

There is always one advantage in a book of extracts, such as we are now considering; it impresses the reader with the individual merit of each piece, which, when the author's entire works are before you, loses something of its significance. Thus, in reading Burns, while acknowledging his wonderful powers in other respects, we are not particularly impressed by his talents as an epigrammatist. Yet what a genius for epigram he had, and had he written nothing else, how highly would he have been estimated!

#### ON ANDREW TURNER.

In se'enteen hunder an' forty-nine,  
Satan took stuff to mak a swine,  
And cuist it in a corner;  
But willy he changed his plan,  
And shaped it *something like a man*,  
And ca'd it Andrew Turner.

Or again:

#### ON A COXCOMB.

Light lay the earth on Billy's breast,  
His chicken heart so tender;  
But build a castle on his head,  
His skull will prop it under.

Or again :

'Stop thief !' Dame Nature cried to Death,  
As Willie drew his latest breath ;  
' You have my choicest model ta'en ;  
How shall I make a fool again ?

How curiously different, and yet in no respect inferior, sounds this epitaph by Porson, written upon a Fellow of his own College :

Here lies a Doctor of Divinity,  
Who was a Fellow, too, of Trinity ;  
He knew as much about Divinity  
As other fellows do of Trinity.

In Hatfield churchyard, Herts, there is an epitaph of considerable merit, but which seems, somehow, to come short of its intention ; the word 'Death' in the third line appears to us to be a misprint for 'Life :

The World's a city full of crooked streets ;  
And Death the market-place where man man meets ;  
If Death were merchandise that men could buy,  
The rich would always live, the poor must die.

In some cases, an antithesis is so alluring, that it is not to be resisted even at the sacrifice of a little legitimacy ; the poetic licence is, however, stretched to its uttermost, when 'clothes' is made to rhyme with 'goes,' as thus :

'Attend your church,' the parson cries ;  
To church each fair one goes ;  
The old go there to close their eyes,  
The young to eye their clothes.

We should like to know the churchyard in which, according to Mr Booth, there stands this epitaph, which, if brevity be the soul of wit, is an epigram indeed :

Thorpe's  
Corpse.

The friends of Mr Thomas Thorpe had originally intended to engrave upon his tombstone,

This corpse  
Is Tommy Thorpe's,

but, upon reflection, it was considered too long.

Political squibs and satires are almost all of the past ; there is no despotism now to be 'tempered by epigrams,' and therefore the epigrams themselves have ceased. How strange and cruel would any such rhymes upon our present royal family appear as these, which were composed on the death of Frederic, eldest son of George II. :

Here lies Fred,  
Who was alive, and is dead :  
Had it been his father,  
I had much rather :  
Had it been his brother,  
Still better than another :  
Had it been his sister,  
No one would have missed her :  
Had it been the whole generation,  
Still better for the nation :  
But since 'tis only Fred,  
Who was alive, and is dead,  
There's no more to be said.

Mr Landor, whose name may well be Savage, penned even a more bitter epitaph upon the family of Georges :

George the First was always reckoned  
Vile—but viler George the Second ;  
And what mortal ever heard  
Any good of George the Third ?  
When from earth the Fourth descended,  
Heaven be praised, the Georges ended.

Among Hone's works, there is this capital rhymed advice to the agriculturists of the date 1722 :

Man, to the plough ;  
Wife, to the cow ;  
Girl, to the sow ;  
Boy, to the mow ;  
And your rents will be netted.

These lines were happily travestied in the *Times* newspaper under the title of *The Farmer's Centenary contrasted*, in 1822—in illustration of the causes of agricultural distress :

Man, tally-ho !  
Mim, piano ;  
Wife, silk and satin ;  
Boy, Greek and Latin ;  
And you 'll be *Gazetted*.

We never see epigrams in the *Times* now ; and even in *Punch* they are growing rare. In the latter paper, there have, however, been some excellent political *jeux-d'esprit*, which we are glad to see rescued from oblivion in the book before us. For instance :

No wonder Tory landlords flout  
'Fixed Duty,' for 'tis plain  
With them the Anti-corn-law Bill  
Must go against the grain.

Again :

'I wonder if Brougham thinks as much as he talks,'  
Said a punster, perusing a trial ;  
'I vow, since his lordship was made Baron Vaux,  
He's been *Vaux et praterca nihil*.'

One of the best epitaphs and parodies in one, that ever was printed, is *Punch's* pathetic stanza *On a Locomotive* :

Collisions four  
Or five she bore ;  
The signals were in vain ;  
Grown old and rusted,  
Her boiler busted,  
And smashed the excursion-train.

Yet even this is equalled, if not surpassed, by those lines on the young gentleman at the university who did not succeed in getting his degree :

Pluckings sore  
Long time he bore,  
Coaches \* were in vain ;  
At last, disgusted,  
He took and cursed it,  
And didn't try again.

#### MISS BURKINYOUNG'S COLLEGE.

EVERYBODY recollects the string of questions categorically propounded in the *Vicar of Wakefield*. 'Can you cut the boys' hair ?' 'No.' 'Then you're not fit for a school.' 'Have you had the small-pox ?' 'No.' 'Then you won't do for a school.' 'Can you lie three in a bed ?' 'No.' 'Then you certainly will not do for a school.'

Times have changed since Goldsmith wrote, and Miss Etterly's scholastic venture was in girls ; still, so unqualified was she for the enterprise, that the above reiterated answer might have been made to her with substantial advantage. Pity that some friend, when she was about to embark in the undertaking, did not purchase an intelligent parrot, and teaching it this important *refrain*, present it to our heroine. It would have screamed words of wisdom into her pretty little ears. But Lucy Etterly owned no friend sufficiently intimate to advise her. She had been brought up in a lonely personage among the Westmoreland hills, and now found herself, at the age of thirty-two, motherless, fatherless, and brotherless, with the sum of three hundred and fifty pounds lying in her name at the Bank of England. A gentlewoman could not

\* Private tutors.

live on the scanty interest derivable from this amount, and Lucy had no wish to pass the remainder of her days in inactivity. Since her mother's death, she had managed her father's small household with tolerable success; and now that he also had departed, her ambition prompted her to mix in busier scenes. Though she dearly loved the mist-couered fells and brawling streams of her native county, she had often, during her father's lifetime, sighed for a change. Liverpool had, up to this time, been the Ultima Thule of her travels, for her father's income had been extremely small; and even in these railway-days, the cheapest device poor people can adopt is to stay quietly at home. No wonder, then, that being her own mistress, she burned with a desire to see the world. Less soaring than Madame Ida Pfeiffer, she felt no inclination to penetrate the pestilential forests of Central Africa, or to climb the Peter Botte mountain; her aim was limited to beholding the civilised regions of Europe, the gay boulevards of Paris, the quaint old canal-pierced avenues of Ghent, the picture-galleries of Munich, the churches of Cologne; and she considered that she had hit on an admirable plan for accomplishing her design. A neighbouring farmer's wife had suggested that she should go out as a governess, and had even implied the possibility of her own seven daughters enjoying the advantages of her teaching. But Miss Etterly shrank from the recommendation with horror. To sink at once in her own native district to the position of an ill-paid governess in a rude farmer's family, afforded a frightful prospect.

'No,' soliloquised Miss Etterly courageously; 'I will go up to London, and purchase the good-will of a well-established school. For those branches in which I am deficient, I will engage properly qualified assistants; and oh, how delightful the midsummer holidays will be! I shall take no young ladies whose unnatural parents want to keep them at school all the year round. When breaking-up day comes, everybody shall quit the house, which I shall leave in charge of the cook and housemaid, and then—O pleasure of pleasures!—embark on board the steam-boat for Ostend!'

Let us take a peep at Miss Etterly while she is sitting in the office of Mr and Madame Sharples' Scholastic Agency, Apple Tree Court, Fleet Street, E.C. She does not look nearly thirty-two. A pair of soft gray-blue eyes, a girlishly delicate complexion, and a quantity of golden-brown hair, set off a face of which the remaining features are rather irregular. She is of small stature, but her figure is so trimly proportioned that she does not appear in the least dumpty. Altogether, she looks as unlike a school-mistress as Apple Tree Court seems unfit to grow apples.

The imaginary spectator pities that dove-like little nature in the nest of those two birds of prey. Mr Sharples is short and stout, with a pair of flaccid cheeks shining through the hair which ornaments the greater portion of his countenance. Madame Sharples is a tall, bony, swarthy Parisian dame, with a moustache that many a youthful volunteer might covet. She speaks English fluently enough, but with a strong foreign accent, and possesses that charmingly insinuating manner for which her compatriots are noted. The biography of this worthy couple may be summed up in a couple of sentences. Mr Sharples had been the drawing-master, Madame the French teacher, in a fashionable school at Notting Hill. They had married, and discovered the agency business so profitable, that Madame had given up hammering irregular verbs into her pupils' heads, while Mr Sharples had ceased putting atmospheric effects and bold bits of foliage into the hard, stiff, mechanical drawings which young ladies take home to admiring parents for the holidays. The colloquy between the respective parties was long and animated; it ended in the

transfer of a certain portion of Miss Etterly's bank deposit to the account of Sharples & Co.

A few days after, Miss Etterly took the train at Shoreditch, and was presently conveyed to Palwood, a station on the Great Eastern Railway.

'Where is Tatton-in-the-Willows, please?' she demanded of a porter, who, under the influence of a prospective sixpence, was assiduously attentive.

'Tatton-in-the-Willers? I don't know, miss; I'm a stranger here. Mr Rumsey,' he continued, addressing a very respectable-looking elderly fly-driver, 'where is Tatton-in-the-Willers?'

'Tatton-Mash, that's what the lady means. Fly, miss?'

Lucy Etterly assented, feeling rather shy of her youthful and diminutive appearance.

'Now, whereabouts in the Mash might you wish to go, miss?' asked Mr Rumsey confidentially.

'Oh! Miss Burkinyoung's College.'

The flyman mounted his box, and drove away. It was in the month of January, and the weather was what farmers style open, that is, without frost, but in its place, a charming succession of rain, drizzle, and fog, which converted the rich soil of the Tatton lanes into bottomless quagmires. After floundering along slowly for about three miles, the fly stopped at a decayed lodge-gate, and was then driven up a forlorn-looking avenue of aged elms, underneath which the ground was green with dank moss. Miss Etterly put her anxious little head out of the window, and beheld her future residence, a roomy-looking red-brick mansion, surrounded by tall trees. To her surprise, the flyman stopped in the middle of the avenue, descended from his box, and put his head deliberately in at the window. Had he not been such a respectable-looking man, she might have been alarmed.

'Excuse me, miss,' said he, 'for stopping you here, but I want to say a word in confidence. If I may make so bold, are you coming to the college as a teacher?'

'As proprietor,' answered Miss Etterly with some dignity.

'You've got a sister, miss, of course, or a pardner, to manage it along with you?'

'No; I shall take charge of it myself. But what interest do you take in the matter?'

'Why, miss, I've got two daughters at the school, day-boarders, and I'm only afraid you'll be too young and gentle-looking to tackle 'em. They're a sperrity lot.'

'Oh!' was all Miss Etterly could reply, for she felt rather aghast at the style of pupils she was likely to encounter.

The flyman read her thoughts in her face, and continued: 'You see, miss, I ain't a mere fly-driver. I rent fifty or sixty acres of land, and do a good stroke in the milk-trade with London. This,' said he, pointing rather contemptuously at the vehicle, 'is only for a bit of pleasure, like.'

Miss Etterly bit her lip, and made no reply. Perhaps she thought that people's notions of pleasure differed, and that she should not choose driving a rickety fly, on a dismal winter's day, through the mud and rain, as her own species of diversion.

The fly-proprietor mounted the box, and drove to the door, which was opened by a decent-looking maid-servant. Miss Etterly handed her a card.

'Can I speak to Miss Burkinyoung for a minute?' asked Mr Rumsey mysteriously.

'I'll see,' replied the maid. She returned with the curt message, 'Not to-day,' upon which Mr Rumsey retired, muttering indistinctly to himself.

Miss Etterly was ushered into a small but comfortable-looking apartment, in which a bright fire was blazing. By the fire sat a stout, florid, elderly lady, engaged in sipping a cup of tea.

'Miss Burkinyoung, I believe?' began Miss Etterly timidly.

'Yes, my dear,' answered that lady, in a rich husky voice. 'Come and set by the fire, and warm your poor feet; they must be perished with cold.'

Here was a discovery! a lady who kept a flourishing school (we beg her pardon, college) in the second half of the nineteenth century, actually said 'set' instead of 'sit'; a grammatical solecism which would have caused the hair of Lindley Murray to lift his wig from his head.

'So,' said Miss Burkinyoung, after a few preliminary politenesses, and the offer of a cup of tea, 'you've took the school off them Sharplesses?'

'Yes,' replied Miss Etterly.

'And paid 'em?'

'I have.'

'Well, that's like business; and I'm sure you won't regret it, my dear. You see me and my poor sister Bessie worked the thing nicely together. She was a most accomplished woman, knew everything from Greek down to plain stitch. As for me, I never had much education. When I was a girl, my father was a poor man, and couldn't afford it. Bessie was born after he got rich, and she had masters for everything. But one day he went into the *Gazette*, and died, leaving us girls without a penny. Then we began school-keeping. I could do what Bessie couldn't; I could manage the house. She was a child among the trades-people. But when she died, poor darling, last August, I found I wasn't equal to carrying it on by myself, so I put the property into the *Daily Telegraph*.'

'How many young ladies are there?'

'From twenty to thirty: counting the day-scholars, you may say thirty.'

'Mr Rumsey's daughters attend here, I understand?' said Miss Etterly.

'Mister Rumsey, indeed!' exclaimed Miss Burkinyoung in great wrath. 'He's a very pushing, disagreeable person. Why, what do you think he wanted to see me for just now?'

'I have no idea.'

'To get a balance that he says I owe him. You see, my dear, I took his two girls (and they're the worst-behaved girls in the college) against his milk account, and a drive in the fly now and then, when I want an airing; and he has the impertinence to make out that I owe him money. Why, those girls had extrey German lessons from Dr Krapp, and'—

We will not pursue the worthy lady's catalogue of grievances, which appeared to be interminable. Having finished the detail, she rose and shewed Miss Etterly over the house, concluding by saying that in ten days she would give up possession.

'That, my dear, will allow you time to get yourself straight afore the young ladies arrive: the quarter begins on the 24th.'

'Miss Burkinyoung,' said Miss Etterly timidly, 'would you mind staying a few days longer? You know I—I am quite unaccustomed to keeping a'—

'My child, I should be most happy, but my brother, who's a licensed victualler at the west end of London, is plaguing my life out to go and keep house for him. Everything's going to rack and ruin since he lost his wife—pots stolen daily, potboys tipsy, barmaids borrowing from the till'—

Miss Burkinyoung paused, and rubbed her hands with silent ecstasy at the delightful prospect of cleansing this Augean stable.

The clock on the chimney-piece struck three; there was a ring at the bell, and Mr Rumsey reappeared to convey Miss Etterly back to the station.

Miss Burkinyoung came into the hall to bid her visitor good-bye. She was quite motherly in her affection, and kissed and embraced the little creature with great fervour. Suddenly, the apparition of Rumsey presented itself before her.

'Now, mum,' said he, in a beseeching tone of voice, 'how about that milk-score?'

'Drat the man!' answered the mistress of the house. 'Why, haven't I told you over and over again that your girls have had it out in German, cream and all.'

'Well, all I can say is,' replied the flyman, 'they haven't got much good by it. Why, I had a friend of mine, a German sugar-boiler from Whitechapel, down the other night, and when he come to talk to the girls, he couldn't make head nor tail of what they said.'

'That,' rejoined Miss Burkinyoung reflectively, 'must have been because he was a Low German. I've heard my poor sister Bessie say there's two sorts of German, High and Low.'

'There's two sorts of English, high and low,' said Rumsey sarcastically—'them as pays their debts, and them as doesn't, Miss B. Low German, indeed! He's as good a man as Dr Krapp any day!'

'Now, Rumsey, no impudence,' replied Miss Burkinyoung. 'Call to-morrow, and I'll go over the accounts.'

'She ain't a bad sort of old lady,' said Rumsey, in confidence to Miss Etterly, when they got into the avenue; 'but she don't recollect all them drives she had with Dr Krapp, keeping one on the box in the cold, while he was picking a parcel of dead leaves and nonsense out of the hedges.'

Miss Etterly was oppressed with anxiety as the eventful time for taking possession drew nigh. She was somewhat relieved at receiving a letter from Miss Burkinyoung, saying that Jennings the cook and housekeeper, who had purposed leaving to better herself, was willing to stay, and that she would find her of great use. Another letter arrived the same day, which put Jennings and Miss Burkinyoung completely out of her head. It was on thin paper, bore the Calcutta postmark, and was deeply edged with black. The perusal of this epistle caused her cheek to glow, her bosom to heave, and tears to gather in her eyes. Surprise, sorrow, pleasure, and hope chased one another like the shadows of an April day across her face. There was surprise at the suddenness of the news, sorrow for her cousin's death, pleasure at the prospect of seeing little Nelly, hope at the thought that he whom she had secretly worshipped fifteen years ago was again a free man.

Poor little Lucy! she has enough to think of. Within a few days, she will have the burden of thirty young ladies on her tiny shoulders; still, for the time, she is oblivious of scholastic anxieties; she stands at the window of her private sitting-room in dingy Great Portland Street, with the Calcutta letter open in her hand; her eyes are fixed on vacancy, and her memory wanders to the past, as she thinks of Major Bridgman.

What about Major Bridgman? Why, fifteen years ago, before he got his company, this young gentleman came home from India on his first furlough, and, like many subs. at that epoch of life, fell in love. Miss Etterly's cousin, whose family lived on the Yorkshire borders, was the lady chosen; and, in consequence of his attachment to her, he obtained an introduction to Mr Etterly's family, and was invited to stay at the parsonage. Mrs Etterly had then been dead some years, and Lucy acted as mistress of the house. The weather was dismal and wet; the worthy parson was immersed in his essay on Roman Remains, which, alas! was never published, and now lies yellowing with age among his daughter's cherished treasures; in short, the gallant officer would have been supremely dull but for Lucy. Sweet, innocent maid of seventeen, she exerted all her powers of amusement, and was only too successful for her own peace of mind. Mr Bridgman flirted with her prodigiously, and almost began to think he had selected the wrong cousin. His conduct was very thoughtless and very selfish; but then, all ladies know how selfish men are when they want to amuse themselves.



At last, the young man went away, and in due course of time married Lucy's cousin, little knowing what a barbed dart he had left rankling in that susceptible little bosom at the parsonage. The newly-married pair sailed for India, a happy and attached couple. They had only one child, the aforesaid Nelly, whom they loved with such affection that they could not bear to send her home. As she grew older, her health began to suffer from the climate; and Major Bridgman, who was by this time well able to afford the expense, took a house on the Neigherry Hills for his wife and child. The letter which Lucy held in her hand informed her that Mrs Bridgman was just dead; that Nelly would arrive shortly after the receipt of the letter by one of the Cape ships; and that Major Bridgman himself, as soon as he had settled his affairs, purposed returning, to remain in England for the rest of his days. He entreated Lucy to take charge of Nelly on her arrival. 'There is no one,' wrote the major, 'to whose care I would so willingly intrust her.'

'How fortunately this has happened,' thought Lucy. 'Walter has evidently not heard of poor papa's death, and thinks I am still in Westmoreland. How pleased he will be to find Nelly's education—which has, I dare say, been sadly neglected—being carefully attended to at school, and that school kept by me!' The little woman's heart swelled with satisfaction.

The important day arrived at last, and Miss Etterly quitted Great Portland Street for Tatton-in-the-Willows. Aided by Jennings, who threw herself heart and soul into the work, she caused the house to be thoroughly cleansed from top to bottom, and ordered in her supplies for the bodily sustenance of thirty young ladies.

On the 22d January—two days earlier than the pupils—the teachers began to drop in. First came Mademoiselle Verneuil. She was a smart, vivacious young lady, with bright black eyes and crisp curls, who made herself at home at once. Miss Etterly felt very shy of talking to her. She had read the *Travels of Anacharsis*, but did not feel competent to converse in French with a real native of Paris. However, Mademoiselle Verneuil set her completely at her ease by talking English with perfect fluency, and with an accent that partook more of Regent Street than the Rue Rivoli. Indeed, Mr Rumsey, who has studied these matters, avers that her real name is Fumell, that her father was a compositor in Galignani's newspaper, and that she was born and bred in Hoxton. 'Mind,' he says, 'I don't say she can't speak the language like a good un; but she's no more French than my bay mare.'

Next came Dr Krapp, who had been spending the Christmas holidays in his native Hanover. He was a tall, thin, fair man, wearing spectacles. Dr Krapp had merely walked over to pay his respects; he lodged at Palwood, near the railway station, where he had several pupils. He not only taught German, but gave instruction in botany, mineralogy, calisthenic exercises, and singing on the Hullah system.

Lastly, Miss Bunting, the English teacher, arrived. Miss Burkinyoung had been forced to engage her upon her sister's death, to cover her own grammatical deficiencies; but Miss Etterly had intended to dispense with her services. Miss Bunting had, however, written such a powerful account of all her struggles and difficulties, that the soft-hearted little woman resolved to keep her, at least for a time. Poor Miss Bunting was tall and ungainly in appearance, with a large plain flat face, scanty sandy hair, and invisible eyebrows. She was the daughter of a man who had been an extensive bookbinder, but had sunk under the pressure of competition, and now, in his old age, was forced to work as a journeyman, though his failing eyesight scarcely permitted him to earn a subsistence.

Dr Krapp and Mademoiselle Verneuil were fast

friends. As they strolled together down the avenue, Mademoiselle observed: 'There's that nasty old Bunting back again. I should hope this new mistress won't keep her. She was all very well for Miss Burk' (this was the familiar rendering of the late respected proprietress's name), 'who scarcely knew B from a bull's foot; but Miss Etterly looks like a lady.'

'A very nice little lady,' said Dr Krapp.

'Don't you get too fond of her, doctor,' replied Mademoiselle, tapping his arm sharply with the handle of her umbrella, 'or I shall become jealous. But I do wish this old Bunting would go.'

'Why, poor wretch, what will she do? She will starve.'

'I can't help that; I detest her—she is such a spy. Don't you recollect, when Miss Burk was up in London, and my friends came down to see me, how she told of us, and Miss B. stopped all the expenses out of my salary?'

'Aha!' laughed the German; 'I remember. But then your friends ate up a whole ham; and that funny cousin of yours—bah! what a noisy fellow, with his song, *Bow, wow, woe*. Besides, you know, most amiable Mamzelle, that somebody filled poor Miss Bunting's boots with treacle.'

On the 24th, the young ladies began to arrive, and four days later, lessons commenced. Poor little Miss Etterly's heart palpitated as she sat in the school-room, elevated on a chair of state, with Mrs Markham's *History of England* in her hand, while the class was ranged around her.

'What were the causes,' asked Miss Etterly gravely, 'that led to the Great Civil War?'

There was no reply. She put the question to each girl of the division: they all remained silent.

'Please, miss,' said one young lady, 'that's not the way Miss Burkinyoung used to do it, miss. She gave us Mangnall's *Questions*, miss: we each learned an answer by heart, and then she began regularly at the top, miss.'

Miss Etterly did not approve of her predecessor's system. 'I don't want you to answer like parrots,' she said, 'but like sensible girls.'

'Please, miss, I know,' exclaimed Matilda Rumsey eagerly.

'Well?' asked Miss Etterly.

'The shop-money.' The class tittered.

'She is right,' said Miss Etterly, 'excepting for a single letter. The levying of the ship-money was one of the causes.'—

Here one of the young ladies uttered a loud cry, 'Oh! Miss —! Matilda Rumsey has pinched my arm.'

'And I'll do it again,' answered Matilda. 'Why did you poke me with your book?'

'Miss Rumsey,' said Miss Etterly, 'I am astonished'—

'Miss Etterly, I can bear this no longer,' exclaimed Mademoiselle Verneuil, her eyes flashing with indignation, as she rose from her seat. 'Miss Bunting has publicly insulted me.'

The class separated to allow Mademoiselle to pass through their ranks, and stood staring with open mouths.

'What is the matter?' said Miss Etterly rising, and advancing towards the desk where Miss Bunting sat, her face bathed with tears.

'She called me an impostor,' exclaimed Mademoiselle.

'What is this disturbance about, Miss Bunting?' repeated Miss Etterly. Miss Bunting continued to sob, but made no reply. 'If you do not answer, I shall think you are in the wrong,' argued the mistress.

'It is no matter, madam,' at length murmured Miss Bunting. 'I have suffered too long; I had better leave.' And she gathered up her books, and quitted the room.

Kind-hearted little Miss Etterly was grieved at her

distress, and, regardless of Charles I., followed her from the apartment. She overtook her on the staircase. 'Come into my bedroom, Miss Bunting,' she said. Miss Bunting obeyed. 'Now, then, tell me the truth,' began Miss Etterly, 'and I shall not be angry with you.'

The little woman's appearance was at no time formidable, and now she was trembling with emotion, while the tears stood in her eyes. 'Come, my dear,' she said coaxingly, 'tell me.' Miss Bunting still remained silent. There was a knock at the door, and Rosa, the elder Miss Rumsey, burst into the room. She was a fine, handsome, rosy-cheeked girl of fourteen, but her eyes were now swollen with tears.

'Miss Etterly,' she began impetuously, 'do you allow Mamzelle to box my ears?'

The schoolmistress hesitated. To say 'yes,' seemed so unfeeling; to say 'no,' might be utterly subversive of discipline. 'For what reason has she boxed your ears?'

'Because I said I should tell the truth about Miss Bunting. All the rest of the girls are such a set of cowards, they're afraid to say a word. Now, miss, I'll tell you. Mamzelle was giving us a French lesson, but instead of reading out *Télémaque*, she began to repeat a story all about a bookbinder who had a hideous ugly daughter. We knew she meant Miss Bunting, and all the girls were laughing and enjoying it. At last, Miss Bunting started up, and said: "Mamzelle, if you wish to insult me, please do it in your native language." You know, Miss Etterly, she's no more French than I am. Then Mamzelle fired up, and came and told you.'

'Is this true, Miss Bunting?' asked the mistress.

'It is,' said Miss Bunting, still weeping.

Miss Etterly's blue eyes sparkled with anger.

'Mademoiselle shall quit my house at once.'

'O no. Pray, don't send her away,' exclaimed Miss Bunting. 'It will ruin your school. All the girls are so fond of Mamzelle, and she is an excellent teacher. I will go. I shall get a situation elsewhere—where, perhaps,' she added with a sob, 'they will not mind my plain face.'

'You shall not go, Miss Bunting,' said the little schoolmistress; 'you are a good, kind creature.'

But the English teacher was inflexible. She ascended to her room, packed and corded her humble trunk, received the few days' wages due to her (Miss Etterly insisted on paying her journey to and from London), and departed in Rumsey's fly.

'Yes,' exclaimed Rosa Rumsey to the other girls, 'you may call me and Matty "Milk below," if you like, but we've got kinder hearts than any of you. My father won't charge that poor thing for her drive, as most of you would.'

Miss Etterly was in sore distress.

'Don't you go for to make yourself unhappy, miss,' said Jennings the cook; 'she's an artful creetur that Miss Bunting; she wouldn't leave you in the lurch like this, if she hadn't a better place to go to.'

Mademoiselle then came forward, and related her version of the story. 'Miss Bunting,' she said, 'is well enough, but she has a dreadful temper. She overheard a real story I was telling the young ladies, and imagined I was talking about her. She then used language to me such as no lady can endure.'

Miss Etterly did not know what to believe, but she held her peace. She dreaded strife and contention, and feared that if she spoke she would only excite Mademoiselle Verneuil to a fresh burst of anger. Poor Miss Bunting has gone, she reflected; perhaps now Mademoiselle will conduct herself properly.

She retired to rest that night with a heavy heart, buoyed up only by the thoughts of the far-distant midsummer holidays, and the advent of Nelly.

Three weeks later, Miss Nelly arrived, accompanied by a native nurse, and escorted by a smart boy of small stature, who introduced himself as Mr

Culthorpe, clerk to the ship-brokers to whom the vessel had been consigned.

'In accordance with the letter left by you, madam, at our office,' said this young gentleman, addressing Miss Etterly, 'Captain Greig wished me to bring the young lady safe to her destination, for this darkey,' he continued, pointing to the ayah, 'is good for nothing.'

In fact, the unfortunate creature sat huddled up, shivering like an animated *blanc-mange*. 'Pray, madam,' pursued the dapper youth, 'might I be permitted to see Miss Tufnell? Her family and ours are very old friends.'

Miss Etterly was so taken up with caressing Nelly, and interrogating her concerning her father, that she did not hear the question until it was repeated.

She reflected—Clarissa is one of the best behaved girls in the school. 'Certainly, Master Culthorpe,' she replied, 'if Mademoiselle Verneuil is present at the interview.'

Master Culthorpe was accordingly shewn into the visiting-chamber, where he found Mademoiselle Verneuil, who received him with great suavity. A blush of pleasure tinged the youth's cheek as the door opened and admitted Clarissa Tufnell.

She was a very tall, pretty girl of thirteen, with pensive blue eyes, and light auburn hair. She looked, as Mr Rumsey might have remarked, as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth.

The young couple shook hands, and conversed with the utmost propriety for some minutes. Suddenly Miss Clarissa knelt down before Mademoiselle, and taking one of her hands, respectfully kissed it.

'My sweet Mademoiselle,' she said in French, 'Alfred and I are lovers of a fidelity unparalleled. Would it deolate you to quit the apartment for a few seconds?'

'It is impossible, my angel,' replied Mademoiselle in the same language. 'What would you say, that you cannot say in my presence?'

'This is the festival of St Valentine, and we wish to exchange photographs.'

'That is not forbidden,' said Mademoiselle sentimentally. 'Exchange your likenesses, my children; I will look on approvingly.'

After some minutes had been employed in this deeply interesting operation, Master Culthorpe took his departure in high spirits.

That night, after the pupils had retired to bed, Miss Etterly sat puzzling her head over something far more formidable to a schoolmistress than history or geography—namely, the volume of household expenditure.

There was a knock at the door.

'Come in,' said Miss Etterly.

'Please, miss,' began Jennings, 'whatever are we to do with that heathenish woman? I cooked her a chop—she wouldn't eat it; I offered her a slice of roast-beef—she wouldn't eat it; and now she's laying like a dog in front of Miss Nelly's door.'

'It's the custom with these people,' said Miss Etterly quietly. 'And, Jennings, speaking of meat, I wish every one was as abstemious as that poor creature. Do you know that last week we consumed upwards of three hundredweight of meat?'

'Unpossible, miss.'

'Here it is in the bills. At that rate, every young lady eats more than a pound of meat a day.'

'Growing girls has hearty appetites,' remarked Jennings; 'and then there's that range, miss: that oven wasters a deal of meat.'

'It must be looked to.'

'Very well, miss, I'll send for the bricklayer in the morning.'

Miss Etterly soon discovered that the coming of Nelly was not a source of unmixed pleasure. Her lengthened sojourn in India among a slavish, subservient race had spoiled her temper. She possessed

rather pretty features, but was pale and delicate. Although nearly thirteen, she read very imperfectly, and could not write at all. She disliked going out, complaining that the cold made her shiver, and preferred sitting on the floor, in front of the fire, in company with the ayah, playing with a box of Bengalee toys. She informed Miss Eterly that her papa was coming home very soon, and that then he would buy her a fine carriage to ride in. 'Why, in India,' said she, 'only black people ride in a carriage as shabby as Mr Rumsey's.'

Miss Eterly was delighted to hear that Major Bridgman was shortly expected—she scarcely knew why. It was not merely that she would be glad to see him; she longed for a friend whom she could consult, and on whose advice she could rely, for the poor little lady was growing sadly depressed. Money was flowing out with alarming rapidity, and none would be coming in until midsummer. The kitchen-range had been altered, yet the meat vanished as fast as ever. Can it be the marshy climate? thought Miss Eterly; and yet the girls don't seem to have enormous appetites. 'O dear!' sighed she, as she gazed from the window on the flat, uninteresting landscape, 'how ungrateful I was to my beloved old mountains, and silvery lakes, and foaming streams leaping from rock to rock. How could I ever tire of them! Here the water creeps along as if it were treacle, and the only quadrupeds that possess any vivacity are the frogs.—My trip to Paris, she reflected, as she pored over that inevitable red book of household expenditure, 'must be deferred until another midsummer. But let me not despair; Walter will soon be here to advise, and'—added the little woman, dropping a big round tear on the milk account—'to console me.'

That tear was ominous. There was a knock at the door.

'Come in,' said Miss Eterly.

The author and publisher of the milk account entered; in other words, Mr Rumsey.

'Good-day, miss,' said he. 'Would you object, miss, to my giving the key a turn in the door?'

'Why?' exclaimed Lucy, rising with some uneasiness.

'You needn't be afraid of me, miss; I've been a freeholder and ratepayer in the parish for the last thirty years.'

What was coming next? Miss Eterly's thoughts had been running on sentimental subjects. Mr Rumsey was a widower; perhaps he was going to propose.

'I want to speak to you in confidence, Miss' (Lucy's heart died within her as Mr Rumsey deliberately locked the door. O for an hour of Major Bridgman!)—'about your butcher's bill,' said the dairyman. The anti-climax came so unexpectedly, that Miss Eterly burst into a fit of semi-hysterical laughter. 'Well, miss, you may think it a joke, but I shouldn't, if I was in your place.'

'Indeed, Mr Rumsey,' pleaded Lucy, 'I do not. I was only just now looking over the account, and wondering where all the meat went to.'

'It don't go down them thirty throats,' replied Mr Rumsey in an awful voice, pointing his finger to his own gullet.

'Where, then?' asked Lucy in dread of some terrific disclosure.

'There's a thieving in the case,' said the milkman. 'Better nor half your meat goes up to Whitechapel Market. It's passed out of the parlour-window at twelve o'clock every Thursday night.'

'Who does it?' faltered Miss Eterly.

'Missis Jennings.'

Poor Lucy clasped her hands in despair. The only person in the house whom she felt she could thoroughly trust had turned traitor!

'It goes to my heart, miss, to see an innocent young lady like you robbed right and left. I only

found it out yesterday. Now, I'll hide myself in the garden to-night. Do you, Miss Eterly, keep watch inside; and when her accomplice comes out, I'll nail him.'

Little Miss Lucy had none of the spy element in her composition, and she felt quite ashamed of herself that night as she sat shivering in the dark parlour behind the pianoforte; but she determined to ascertain the truth; and presently, as the novelists say, her worst fears were realised.

A hand softly opened the door, and a stealthy step crossed the apartment. Alas! it was with a sigh of misplaced confidence that Lucy recognised through the gloom the outlines of Mrs Jennings's robust figure. There was a tap at the window. Mrs Jennings raised the sash, and a hoarse voice whispered: 'Have you got it?'

'All right,' replied the culinary traitress: 'hold up the basket.'

'Thieves! thieves!' shouted the stentorian voice of Mr Rumsey. 'Open the front door, Miss Eterly; I've got him.'

In spite of her gentleness, the little woman carried a stout Westmoreland heart in her bosom, and although Jennings, in her precipitate flight from the room, had nearly knocked her down, she boldly unfastened the hall-door. On looking out, she beheld a person of somewhat diminutive appearance struggling vainly in the grasp of the powerful dairyman, who presently dragged him into the hall. Miss Eterly calmly locked the door, and lighted a candle.

'Why, lawks!' exclaimed Mr Rumsey, relaxing his hold, 'this ain't Red Mullins.'

'Master Culthorpe!' cried Miss Eterly in utter astonishment. 'What do you do here, sir?'

That youth, who was by this time seated in the hall-chair, smoothing down his rumpled locks, looked very sheepish, and remained silent.

'Well, it's strange, miss, isn't it?' mused Mr Rumsey. 'I see that Red Mullins come in at the gate with the meat-basket over his arm as plain as I see you; then I pops down under a laurel-bush, and the next minute I nabs this whipper-snapper, who looks like a young gentleman.'

'So I am,' murmured Master Culthorpe in a voice of dolorous treble.

Miss Eterly looked at him for a moment, and a gleam of intelligence passed over her face. 'Detain him, Mr Rumsey,' said she sternly, and mounted the stairs.

She presently returned, carrying a small carpet-bag in her hand, and accompanied by Miss Clarissa Tufnell, who was in full walking-costume.

Clarissa hung her pretty head, and blushed like the rosy dawn.

'Now, Master Culthorpe,' began Miss Eterly authoritatively, 'I insist on knowing what you were doing in my garden?'

Clarissa began to weep; Master Culthorpe, with laudable magnanimity, followed her example. At last he stammered out: 'The governor wouldn't hear of our engagement, so Clara and I determined'—

'Why, child,' said Miss Eterly, 'you are not thirteen!'

'I'm fourteen, ma'am!' replied the youth with offended dignity.

'O dear, dear, dear!' exclaimed the schoolmistress; 'what a pair of naughty creatures! Why, how were you going to do it?' she added, softening rapidly, as she regarded the extreme juvenility of the culprits.

'The ladder,' murmured the boy, 'that leans up against your hen-house.'

'This here's the cause of it all!' exclaimed Mr Rumsey, diving into Master Culthorpe's coat-pocket, and extracting a gaudily-bound book. 'One of these nasty silly romances. I'll be bound, Miss Eterly, you'll find the fellow to this among that young lady's luggage.'

'Now, Mr Rumsey, what are we to do?' asked Miss Etterly.

'This young gentleman must be kept,' replied the milkman decisively. 'We shall have his friends inquiring arter him.'

'Oh, I say, please don't!' began Master Culthorpe piteously.

'Come, my lad,' returned Rumsey, 'I know what's best for your good; moreover, I don't know,' continued he, winking at Miss Etterly, 'but what you won't be indicted for burglary. Anyhow, you shall have a bit of supper and a bed at my house. Now, you can wish yon young lady good-bye.'

Master Culthorpe shook Clarissa's hand somewhat apathetically, when Miss Etterly interfered in her severest voice. 'Miss Tufnell, retire to your room at once. I shall decide what punishment to inflict on you in the morning.'

Poor Clarissa departed, sobbing bitterly; she wept less for herself than for her lover and for his disappointment; while Master Culthorpe, now that the perils of a horsewhip, with which he had expected his shoulders to be environed, were removed, felt—such is the elastic selfishness of the male creation—rather pleased that the affair had terminated thus. In spite of gasconading confidences to boyish friends, he had always doubted in his inner heart the possibility of his passing the Rubicon of marriage; his last idea had been a volunteer uniform, and a pair of gummed moustaches; while, as for parents, he understood that outside the register-office there were persons of both sexes willing to act as father and mother, with any amount of affectionate display included, for the sum of eighteenpence a head. Still, he had begun to shrink, and was not sorry that Mr Rumsey had swooped down upon him, and torn him from the arms of the beloved object.

'As for that other affair,' said Mr Rumsey in a lowered tone of voice, 'that's a more serious. You'd better prosecute both her and Mullins, miss.'

'O no,' said Miss Etterly beseechingly; 'I shall be quite satisfied to have stopped the pilfering for the future. Of course, I must discharge Jennings. Well, Mr Rumsey, I'm extremely obliged to you. You have saved me by your conduct to-night both in pocket and reputation.'

'Always happy to serve you, miss, I'm sure,' replied Rumsey calmly, as if addressing a new customer in the dairy-line. 'Good-night, miss.'

Next morning, Miss Etterly was called up at half-past six by the kitchen-maid. 'Please, 'm, Jennings ain't to be found. Her bed haven't been aleep in.'

The house was searched: it was too true; Jennings had disappeared. Pursued by the furies of a guilty conscience, or else allured by that male Circe, Red Mullins, Jennings had departed without even asking for her quarter's wages. Miss Etterly, while expressing surprise, was secretly pleased to have got rid of a domestic viper so quietly, and bustled about preparing breakfast for the thirty hungry girls, who were dressing and discussing why Clarissa Tufnell was locked up in a room by herself.

While they are thus engaged, let us in spirit enter one of the first-class carriages in the early down-train from Shoreditch.

Two gentlemen are seated in the compartment, one a dapper, clean-shaven, brisk little man, who looks like a thriving city tradesman; the other, a tall, thin, yellow-visaged personage, wearing a large beard, who, although the month is May, and the birds are chirping merrily in the hedgerows, wraps himself in his cloak, and begs to have 'that window closed.'

'Yes, sir,' said the little man, 'ran away from home last evening, and frightened his mother terribly. I said: "Don't be alarmed, my dear. I can give a pretty shrewd guess where the young rogue is."'

'And where do you think he is?' inquired his tall fellow-traveller.

'Why, at Miss Burkinyoung's College.'

'Dear me, that's where I am going.'

'Then we'll walk over together, if you're agreeable. A brisk walk this lovely morning will freshen one up. You see the fact is, sir, it's a boyish love-affair. A very pretty little girl she is, a Miss'—

'Not Bridgman, I trust!' exclaimed the tall gentleman almost fiercely.

'No, no; Tufnell. Daughter of an old family friend. I noticed the boy had been very curious in his manner lately, and as I've gone through the fever once myself, I know something about it.'

The yellow-visaged man coloured slightly, and said: 'The schoolmistress's name, I think, is not Burkinyoung?'

'No; Etterly. The old lady sold out when her sister died. She was no more fit to teach than that telegraph-post. As for the present lady, I don't think much of her. I hear she is a very sweet person, and all that, but totally inexperienced.'

When the train reached Palwood station, Mr Rumsey was waiting on the platform.

'My good man,' began the little gentleman anxiously, 'can you tell us the way to Tatton—Miss Burkinyoung's College?'

'I can, sir,' replied Rumsey respectfully. 'Be your name Culthorpe, sir?'

'Yes,' cried Mr Culthorpe excitedly. 'Bless me!' he said, turning pale, 'has anything happened to my beloved boy?'

'He have eaten,' replied Rumsey, 'as good a breakfast as any boy of that age can eat. He's at my house, sir.'

Mr Rumsey then entered into a detailed statement of the occurrences of the previous night, and led Mr Culthorpe in the direction of his abode.

Meanwhile the other traveller pursued his way pensively through the lanes that led to Tatton-in-the-Willows.

'Fifteen years ago!' he soliloquised. 'It seems like a dream. She was a sweet, pretty girl then. I remember I used to fancy I liked her better than my poor dear Emily. I wonder what I shall think of her now. Keeping a school too! From what that talkative man in the train said, she can't be fitted for it. Well, well, we shall see.'

He reached the college, and knocked with a tremulous hand at the door.

'I will play a trick on her, and give the name of Culthorpe,' thought Major Bridgman with a smile. 'I wonder whether she will recognise me.'

Miss Etterly entered the room in fear and trembling, blushing deeply. She dreaded the interview.

'Oh, Mr Culthorpe,' she began, 'I trust you do not think it is owing to any laxity of discipline on my part'—She paused. Her visitor had fixed his eyes steadily on her face, while a smile was perceptible through his beard.

'Do you really think I am Mr Culthorpe?' he asked.

She recognised the voice instantly. 'O Walter,' she exclaimed—'Major Bridgman, I mean—I am so flurried this morning, that I scarcely know what I am saying.'

He took both her hands in his own.

'Oh, Major Bridgman, how delighted I am to see you! Let me run and bring Nelly.'

'Lucy,' he answered, 'don't address me by that formal name: remember, we are cousins; call me, as you did at first—call me Walter. So you did not recognise me?'

'Not at first,' replied Lucy hesitatingly. It was no wonder; old Time, aided by fifteen burning Indian summers, had used his scythe remorselessly. He had mown down all the major's curly locks, and had sown numerous grizzly tufts among his whiskers. He had set crows-feet in the corners of the major's eyes. In short, to speak plainly, the major was two-and-forty.



Nelly was summoned, and the trio were at the height of happiness when Mr Culthorpe arrived with his son safely tucked under his arm.

'So, Miss Etterly,' he began, 'I've recovered my boy again. But I fear your discipline is not very strict. I find these foolish children have been carrying on a romantic correspondence for weeks; and they would actually have contrived to elope, but for the lucky accident of your cook's delinquencies.'

Miss Etterly blushed scarlet, but made no reply.

'I shall feel it my duty, madam,' continued Mr Culthorpe, 'to acquaint my friend Mr Tufnell with this affair, and I am sure he'—

Poor Lucy burst into tears, and sobbed out: 'O dear me! I am not fit to keep a school.'

'My dear madam,' said Mr Culthorpe kindly, for he was a good-tempered fellow, though rather inclined to be crusty, now that he found his boy was all safe and sound—'my dear madam, on no account would I hurt your feelings, but I really think that is the case. You are too gentle, too easy-going, too confiding.'

'I am rejoiced,' interposed the major, 'to hear you give her such a character, sir. No,' he continued enthusiastically, 'this lady is not fit to keep a school.—Lucy,' he whispered, pressing her hand, 'by and by, we will talk over these matters.'

The midsummer holidays arrived, and Lucy made her long-cherished trip to Paris. She did not go alone; she was accompanied by a gentleman—her husband. As she stands in the *Place de la Concorde*, and gazes with all the fresh delight of a child on the architectural glories around her, how fondly she looks up to that weather-worn face, tracing in its lineaments the well-remembered handsome youth of fifteen years ago.

Miss Burkinyoung's College was once more in the market, and Mr and Madame Sharples pocketed another commission. How devoutly they must have wished for a succession of Lucy Etterlies; but such phenomena are rare.

Poor Miss Bunting has been appointed governess to Nelly. At Lucy's suggestion, the major called upon her, and found her living with her purblind father in the deepest penury. Mr Rumsey has withdrawn Rosa and Matilda from school; he considers their education completed. 'Too complete by half,' he has been heard to say. 'What with novels and German lessons, and the general boarding-school atmosphere, I expect one of them will be going off with Dr Krapp!'

#### SORTES BIBLICÆ.

In every man there exists a certain amount of indication of purpose. Even after a careful and judicious attempt has been made to weigh all circumstances, the balance of advantage towards any one side often remains so undetermined, that it is extremely difficult to choose between a variety of things, measures, or persons. Hence, in part, arises the appeal to some species of sortilege. Add to this, man's restless desire to see into the mysteries of the future, and his constant anxiety to obtain knowledge by some means shorter and less laborious than the ordinary way of experience, and we can in some sort account for the strange systems of divination which have existed in all ages.

In sortilege, there can be no deception. The lot itself clearly cannot deceive, however unhappy may be the cast. It is an incorruptible oracle, one that can neither *Mediæ* nor *Philippiæ*; and this fact, together with a general, vague sort of belief that Divine Providence orders the result, has always formed the chief impulse to its use. In the lesser solemnities of the old Israelitish theocracy, and also

in the early Christian Church, without doubt it was so ordered. Take, for examples, the conviction of Achan the son of Carmi, and the election of St Matthias to the apostleship. The mysterious Urim and Thummim, the twelve-jewelled oracle of the high-priest's breastplate, gave its answer directly from God; but with the death of Malachi, four hundred years before Christ, the jewels grew dim, and the oracle ceased; the 'mother-voice' was silent. But, say the Jewish rabbis, she has left her less perfect daughter behind her, whose voice is heard in the words, especially words from the holy books, which may first strike upon the ear in the time of anxiety. This is the *Bath-col*, or 'daughter-voice.' Here is an example. 'Rabbi Samuel Aben-Ezar went up to Jerusalem with his child Jonah; but afterwards, when he would depart, his son, tarrying behind, was lost. He sought him all day through the city and among his acquaintances, and as the evening came on, weary and anxious, he entered into a synagogue. The *Hrason* was reading from the Book of Jonah, and the words which Rabbi Samuel heard were these: *And Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city.* The *Bath-col* had spoken. The rabbi, too, went out to the "east side of the city," and with his son returned rejoicing.'

In past ages, there has existed among Christians, and pagans too—and, even up to the present time, Christians continue to practise it—a mode of sortilege essentially similar to the Jewish *Bath-col*, and, possibly, in part derived from it. This has received the generic name of *Bibliomancy*, and, in a general way, may be said to consist in opening at random some particular book, and appropriating as a guiding oracle that passage on which the eye has first chanced to light. Among the Greeks, the book most commonly used was Homer; in like manner, the Romans used Virgil. Christians employed the Bible; hence the name *Sortes Biblicæ* or *Sacerorum*; and it was probably rather in imitation of the heathen *Sortes Homericæ*, or *Sortes Virgilianæ*, than with any first-hand reference to the Hebrew belief, that Christians made use of the Holy Scriptures in this way.

The consulters of this Christian *Bath-col* were early disapproved. The practice seems to have been alternately supported and condemned in the church. At the consecration of the great Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria, in 327 A.D., Caracalla, archbishop of Nicomedia, opened the New Testament at Matt. xxv. 41—*The devil and his angels*; but the bishop of Nice contrived to quickly turn back a few pages, and words were read from the thirty-second verse of the thirteenth chapter—*The birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof*. The relevancy of this latter text, however, not being quite apparent to every one, it by and by became known that the former had been first seen; and the agitation and mistrust consequent thereupon hardly ceased throughout the remaining forty-six years of the patriarch's life.

In the Western Church, the *Sortes* were forbidden by more than one pope, and in 465, the provincial council of Vannes condemned all persons guilty of the practice to be excommunicated. But in the twelfth century it was publicly resorted to as a means of detecting heretics. In the Gallican Church it was practised at the election of bishops, children being employed to act for the candidates; and the candidate for whom the most favourable text was obtained, was chosen to be bishop. Up to nearly the middle of the last century, a similar custom was extant in the same church at the installation of abbots and canons. It seems to have been last in use at Boulogne, and to have been discontinued about

1745. At one period, probably on account of the prohibitions above alluded to, the Bible was very much less employed for purposes of sortilege, and Virgil came greatly into use. Our Charles I. consulted it at Oxford, and it is well known what an ominous reply he received. It is evident, however, that upon the whole Virgil is very far from being well adapted to such a use; hence the Bible, on account of its vastly superior scope and application, has maintained, and must continue to maintain, its ground against any other book. Accordingly, in 1729, we find Dr Doddridge, the eminent dissenting divine, then settled in Leicestershire, allowing himself to be influenced by the *Sortes Biblicæ* in his acceptance of an official call to Northamptonshire.\* It is remarkable that Doddridge was one of the class most vehemently and exaggeratedly opposed to what is currently called superstition. So strong is the desire to see into the future, and so indestructible the latent belief that a prospective knowledge for guidance may be obtained. 'The records of conversion amongst felons and other ignorant persons,' says De Quincey, 'might be cited by hundreds upon hundreds to prove that no practice is more common than that of trying the spiritual fate, and abiding by the import of any passage in the Scriptures which may first present itself to the eye.'

That even in later times the practice is widespread, is testified to in the foregoing; that up to about the middle of the last century at least, it was not confined to either the very ignorant or the very superstitious, is sufficiently evident from the case of Dr Doddridge. The writer of this paper is able to give many further instances within his own personal knowledge, dating up to the present year. Here are a few of them:

Some years ago, A, having nearly concluded the ordinary four years' course of study at one of the Scottish universities, was about to take his degree. He had always considered himself rather uncertain in the matter of mathematics; and as the time for his examinations, seven in number, approached, he became very nervously apprehensive as to the result. I, with some others, happened to be with him one evening when the conversation turned upon the subject of the coming examinations. It was proposed and agreed upon to make trial of the *Sortes Virgilianæ*, with regard to A's success or failure. Several passages were hit upon; but no amount of liberty or twisting could bring the point in question within the scope of any one of them. Ultimately the Virgil was exchanged for a Bible; A shut his eyes, opened the book, placed the point of a pencil on the page, and requested me to read the passage. It was the nineteenth verse of the fifth chapter of Job, and I read the words following: *He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.* A opened his eyes wide enough now, but he only remarked that he feared it was rather irreverent work, closed the book, and changed the subject of conversation. A fortnight afterwards, he passed his seven examinations, and took his degree with honours.

The following is not less remarkable. In the autumn of 1859, B started on a tour through Wales; he was unaccompanied. After an absence of three weeks, his friends became somewhat anxious about him, not having heard anything of him since his departure; but no very serious apprehensions were entertained as to his ultimate safety, except by his eldest sister, who seems to have had a conviction that something was wrong. However, she kept her fears to herself; but in her anxiety, she privately had recourse to the *Sortes Biblicæ*. From a feeling that it might not be altogether right to employ the canonical Scriptures in this way, she used the Apocrypha. She opened the book, and at once placed her finger on these words: *But it came to pass that he fell down*

*from his chariot, carried violently; so that having a sore fall, all the members of his body were much pained.\** Such an unfavourable turn naturally tended not to subside her fears; she formed an excuse for leaving home, saying that she wished to go and see some friends at a distance. In reality, she followed her brother into Wales; and after a good deal of travelling, found him lying in a dangerous condition. He had been pitched violently from a dog-cart, and had received injuries from which he recovered only after many weeks of careful and anxious nursing from his sister.

Another instance is somewhat different in form. At a recent parliamentary election, C was in great doubt as to which of two candidates he should give his vote for. The Radical candidate was his personal friend, and expected his vote. But, on the other hand, C's theories were strongly opposed to Radical principles. One morning, still in doubt, and earnestly thinking on the subject, he entered the breakfast-room; his son, quite a little boy, was having a reading-lesson out of the Bible, and as C entered the room, the following passage forced itself upon his attention: *My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change.†* This was precisely the Hebrew Bath-col. C acted according to the utterance of the voice, and gave his vote for the other candidate, who was not 'given to change.' Nevertheless, the Radical gained the election.

Of course it frequently happens that the passage turned up is hopelessly irrelevant to the matter in question; but it can be but seldom that the oracle refuses in such plain terms to give an answer, as in a very remarkable instance which occurred in the present year: the words were from St Matthew, xii. 39; they are these: *There shall no sign be given.*

The following rather ludicrous instance is remarkable for what may be called the highly applicable nature of its relevancy. D determined to consult the *Sortes Virgilianæ* concerning a certain very trivial matter. It may be remarked in passing that D certainly could not have construed a line of Virgil to save his life; however, he marked a passage in the dark, and left it for the morning light to reveal the answer; and what did it reveal? A small edition of Johnson's Dictionary (which my fine gentleman keeps to assist him in his spelling), with the following highly interesting passage underlined: '*Fool, verb, to trifle, deceive, disappoint.*' If that foolish young man here designated by the fourth letter of the alphabet should chance to read this in *Chambers's Journal*, he will not fail to recollect how he played the fool, and was fooled for his pains, and got laughed at into the bargain.

These cases will suffice. The reader can form his own judgment on the matter in hand. Whatever that judgment may be, the following facts remain: That sortilege of some sort has been practised from the earliest ages; that in the early Israelitish Church, and in the early Christian Church, the whole disposing of the lot was undoubtedly ordered by Divine Providence; that when the divinely ruled oracle in the high-priest's breastplate ceased to give an answer, it was, and is still, believed by the Jews that another or 'daughter-voice' was given in its stead; that the belief in, and practice of, the *Sortes Biblicæ* (which is at least fifteen hundred years old) is exactly analogous to the Jewish belief; that it still exists; that it has not been confined to either the very ignorant or the very superstitious; and, finally, that many very remarkable cases can be cited in connection with it.

It may be said, on the other hand, that most irrelevant passages are frequently turned up, and that these remarkable cases are really no more than remarkable coincidences.

\* The case is circumstantially recorded in Orton's *Life of Doddridge*.

\* 2 Maccabees, xix. 7.

† Proverbs xxiv. 21.

At all events, you had better not try the *Sortes*—it may be done irreverently; and, besides, it is apt to become a foolish weakness.

### THE MONTH:

#### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE anniversary meeting of the Geographical Society was a triumph for the President and Council of that popular corporation, for news had come from Captains Speke and Grant, these adventurous African travellers, that, in the words of their own telegram, 'the Nile was settled.' Yes, the mystery of the great river that flows through 'old, hushed Egypt' is a mystery no longer. It has awed and puzzled historians, travellers, and geographers, ever since mankind had a written history, and now two British explorers have reduced it to a topographical fact. Bruce did the same for the branch, known as the Blue Nile; but that is a short river compared with the White Nile, the principal branch, which has its source to the south of the equator. Even at its starting-place, the Nile is a great river, for it flows out of Lake Nyanza, in a stream one hundred and fifty yards wide, and plunges at once over a fall of twelve feet. The lake, situate among the mountains, has a length and breadth of about one hundred and fifty miles, fed by several streams, and these, when swollen by the equatorial rains, fill the great basin to overflowing; the flood rushes down the valley of the Nile, and occasions the periodical inundations which fertilise the land of Egypt. It is a simple explanation of a grand natural phenomenon, which dates from times more remote than the building of the pyramids.

Messrs Grant and Speke worked their way up from Zanzibar, on the eastern coast, in nearly two years of travel, detained in some places by native chiefs, but meeting in others with tribes whose manners and customs were in agreeable contrast with those of neighbouring tribes. Among the Uganda, this was especially the case. From the lake to Gondokoro, the highest trading-station on the Nile, the distance is about four hundred miles, across a territory never before travelled by white men. This was a painful part of the travellers' route; but they were rewarded on arrival by meeting Consul Petherick, whose death had been reported in the newspapers, and Mr Samuel Baker, by whom their voyage down to Khartoum was facilitated. Mr Baker is a private gentleman, travelling on his own account. He is now, as Sir Roderick Murchison informs us, exploring another large lake which lies to the east of Speke's track, and is supposed to contribute to the waters of the Nile. We may anticipate, as a result of all this enterprise, that in the course of a few years, Khartoum, which stands at the confluence of the Blue and the White Nile, will become an important station for steam-boats and trading caravans. Already there is a project, sanctioned by the Pasha, for extending the railway and telegraph thither, and opening communications between that far-away city and Suakin, a port on the Red Sea.

Papers have been read before the Royal Dublin Society on the Salmon-fisheries of Ireland, interesting alike from the economical and natural-history point of view. One of the authors, Mr Andrews, describes from actual observation the process by which the fish deposit their ova in the shallows, and cover them with gravel to await maturity; and it is gratifying to know that of late salmon have been much more abundant in the rivers of Ireland than formerly. In 1834, there were sent to the London market 350 boxes of Irish salmon, each box weighing 112 pounds. In 1862, the number was 7841. The total number of boxes received in London in that same year was 31,746, of which, besides the Irish instalment, 22,796 came from the rivers of Scotland, 568 from the

Netherlands, 454 from Wales, and 87 from Norway. More than three million and a half of pounds!

However true it be that astronomy is one of the exact sciences, it is also true that astronomers have at times to modify their conclusions or calculations. This is what might naturally be expected from increasing knowledge of cosmical phenomena and improved methods of observation. A new instance has occurred: M. Le Verrier, while studying some of the phenomena of gravitation, found certain difficulties which he could explain only on the supposition, that the sun is not so heavy by one-tenth as has been estimated, or that the earth is one-tenth heavier. His own opinion was in favour of the latter conclusion. But in the meantime, M. Foucault had discovered that the velocity usually assigned to light in its passage from the sun to the earth had been over-estimated: the sun is consequently one-thirtieth less distant from the earth than had been supposed; and thus M. Le Verrier's inference as to the lesser weight of the sun turns out to be the right one. M. Foucault's conclusions have been confirmed by observations of another kind made at Greenwich Observatory; so that henceforth it will have to be printed in school-books and astronomical treatises that the sun is ninety-two million miles distant, not ninety-five million, as hitherto stated. Another fact—a small one—has also to be put on record: the number of little planets now discovered is seventy-eight; the last is named Diana. At this rate, we shall soon hear that a hundred of these tiny worlds are revolving between Mars and Jupiter. What sort of inhabitants can they have?

A curious phenomenon has been observed near Moscow, which is the more remarkable as Russia is not a mountainous country, and the phenomenon in question is one of those which the presence of mountains might occasion, by the action of gravity. In the course of a survey in which triangulations were taken with the usual instruments, a deviation was noticed at all or nearly all the observing stations, tending, however, towards one central point. A notion of what is meant may be formed by supposing a plumb-line suspended at places miles apart around a great plain, and in each instance inclining a little from the perpendicular. This would imply some disturbance of the law of gravity, such as might be produced by a great hollow below the surface of the earth within the range of observation. But the true explanation is yet to be ascertained; and it is so important to science to clear up the problem, that a fresh series of observations and pendulum experiments are to be made under the direction of Mr Otto Struve, one of the leading astronomers of Russia, which perhaps will lead to a discovery of the cause of a phenomenon unprecedented, we believe, in the annals of science.

In the *Proceedings of the British Meteorological Society*, Mr Bloxam discusses a subject interesting to all Her Majesty's subjects—namely, the winter which occurs in the spring of the year, and the summer which occurs in autumn. We all know what a 'blackthorn winter' is, having been set shivering thereby at the end of April. Having studied and compared tables of the temperature of all the months for many years, Mr Bloxam finds that a low degree of humidity, by favouring radiation, is the cause of the sensation of cold that prevails at the period in question. 'On the 21st April,' he says, 'the humidity is at its minimum value for the year—namely, 71.7. This is the essential fact, which solves the problem: the 21st of April differs from every other day in the year in this respect; the blackthorn winter reaches its culminating point on this day; and the evaporation produced by this low degree of humidity gives rise to that peculiar feeling of cold which characterises the season. . . . The heat received from the sun's rays at this period of the year is great, owing to the transparency of the atmosphere and the clearness of

the sky. This perhaps renders the sense of coldness the more conspicuous and distressing.

The blackthorn winter is thus shewn to be due rather to diminished moisture in the air than to low temperature. Reverse the conditions, and we have an explanation of the 'St Martin's summer,' which occurs commonly after the middle of October. 'The 9th November,' continues Mr Bloxam, 'may be regarded as the day on which the equinoctial summer culminates; because the humidity attains a high and maximum value on that day. Excessive humidity, and consequent defective evaporation, are the cause of the sensible warmth which attracts attention. . . . May the low temperature of the atmosphere, and the comparatively high temperature of the dew-point, be explained by the facts, that the atmosphere proceeds from higher latitudes than it does during our summer, and from cold land-districts; but, while crossing the Atlantic, it takes up a large quantity of vapour?' Mr Bloxam writes in an inquiring and suggestive, not a dogmatic spirit, and we recommend perusal of his article to all meteorologists.

Within the past few months, the agricultural mind has been somewhat agitated by rumours that the land was wearing out. We observe that Dr Daubeny is giving lectures at Oxford 'on the supposed deterioration of the soil of Great Britain through the exhaustion of vegetable mould.' Should these lectures be published, farmers will have an opportunity to get trustworthy information on an important subject. Some whom we know are of opinion that if the sewage-question were settled as it ought to be—namely, by pouring the sewage of towns over the fields and meadows, instead of into the rivers—we should never hear anything further about exhaustion of the soil.

In printing our article 'As to the Jawbone,' last week, we did not expect so soon to have to report further particulars on that exciting question. At a meeting of the Geological Society on the 3d of June, Dr Falconer professed a further modification of his opinions, in as far as the class of fresh-looking flints found at Moulin-Quignon are concerned: these, which he had recently admitted to be authentic, he now does not believe in. He thinks the workmen practise arts which impose upon even onlooking savans, causing flints which they have themselves manufactured to appear as if they dropped out of the undisturbed section of gravel. Of course, he now still more disputes the antiquity of the jawbone. On the other hand, Mr Prestwich reported on a new examination of the gravel at Moulin-Quignon, and unhesitatingly pronounces it the high-level or ancient gravel. Against the opinion of Mr Elie de Beaumont that it is modern, and the result of torrential action, our English expert places himself in full opposition. It is also to be kept in mind, amidst all these unfortunate dubieties and disputings of our savans, that, whatever comes of the jawbone and the fresh-looking flints, no shade of doubt rests on the old-looking, semi-rolled, tintured flints, found during many years past in the valley of

the Somme, from which has been drawn the conclusion that man existed there before the last great geologic changes, and contemporaneously with the extinct mammalia.

Mr Beresford Hope has delivered a lecture in the Potteries, entitled *The World's Debt to Art*, in which he shews that art is not a subject merely for holiday use, but for all times and seasons, and for all the circumstances of life. Those persons best discharge their debt who best develop art on true principles, a proposition which, as there is so much of mere pretence and false principle, furnishes occasion for a vigorous argument against the blunders perpetrated every day in dress, painting, and building. All our large cities and towns contain miles of dead, dreary streets of 'soulless houses,' as Mr Hope calls them, which at but a small advance on the cost might have been made to look picturesque, and exhibit individuality of character. Perhaps, if building and architecture were what they ought to be, dress would not be so devoid of real taste as it is. Mr Hope is severe upon the chimney-pot hat, the swallow-tail dress-coat, the coal-scoop bonnet, and crinoline.

The medical journals record a most important fact concerning vaccination. Mr Henry Lee states that proper vaccine lymph is amorphous and transparent. Any lymph which, under the microscope, shews the presence of blood- or pus- corpuscles, is unfitted for use.

#### A LOCK OF HAIR.

ONLY a lock of hair, tied with a silken string,

Carefully kept for years, like a miser's pile of gold:

Little to prize in the keeping of such a simple thing,

But for a darling head long lost in the days of old.

Only a lock of hair. Ah, well, it were better to have

Even one little tress safe from the Spoiler's hand,

Than, with the light of her love down in the darkling grave,

Lonely to wander around a desolate, weary land.

Only a lock of hair. Yet something to look at, and kiss:

Something to keep in mind what never can be again:

Something to tell of days unshadowed by anguish like this:

Something to bring soft thoughts to a saddened and dreary brain.

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The present number of the *Journal* completes the Nineteenth Volume; a title-page and index prepared for it may be had of the publishers and their agents.

END OF NINETEENTH VOLUME.



